



*RENEWABLE  
ENERGY  
PROGRAM*

**CALIFORNIA  
ENERGY  
COMMISSION**

**CONSUMER  
EDUCATION  
PROGRAM**

**COMMITTEE DRAFT GUIDEBOOK**

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# **CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

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# I – Introduction

This *Consumer Education Guidebook* is one of several guidebooks that the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) has adopted to implement the Renewable Energy Program pursuant to Senate Bill 1038 (SB 1038, Sher, Statutes of 2002, Chapter 515). It describes the requirements for receiving funding under the Consumer Education Account of the Renewable Energy Program.

The Consumer Education Program is one of several program elements within the Energy Commission's Renewable Energy Program. Funding for the Renewable Energy Program under SB 1038 is collected from the ratepayers of the three largest investor-owned utilities in California to support existing, new, and emerging renewable electricity generation technologies.

The Energy Commission has adopted other guidebooks to address the requirements for receiving funding under other accounts of the Renewable Energy Program. In addition, the Energy Commission has adopted guidelines governing the overall administration of the Renewable Energy Program. These guidelines are set forth in the *Overall Program Guidebook*, describing how the Renewable Energy Program will be administered and providing information and requirements that apply to all accounts of the Renewable Energy Program.

To qualify for funding under the Consumer Education Account, applicants must satisfy the requirements contained in both the *Overall Program Guidebook* and this *Consumer Education Guidebook*, which replaces the previous guidebook titled, *Volume 5 - Consumer Education Subaccount Guidebook*, along with the requirements issued in the specific solicitation to which they are responding. These guidebooks, along with other information about the Renewable Energy Program, can be found on the Energy Commission's website at [www.energy.ca.gov/renewables](http://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables).

# II – Purpose

The Consumer Education Program promotes renewable energy and helps build a consumer market for renewable energy and emerging renewable technologies. The goals of the program are to:

- Raise consumer awareness of renewable electricity generation options and their benefits,
- Increase the purchases of small-scale emerging renewable systems installed on customer premises, and
- Leverage strategic alliances and partnerships with organizations connected to renewable energy in California.

### **III – Overview**

The Consumer Education Program is structured to provide grants and contracts to eligible projects and programs that further the purposes of the Renewable Energy Program. To qualify for funding, entities must generally compete for funding under a competitive solicitation. These solicitations may be generic and open to all projects or targeted to a specific area of interest. It is expected that grant solicitations will be held on a regular basis to achieve the program's purposes.

### **IV – Eligibility Requirements**

#### **Projects Eligible for Funding**

Projects and programs qualified for funding under the Consumer Education Program must provide information to increase public knowledge about renewable energy, overcome market barriers to adopting renewable energy, and conduct other activities that assist in building the market for renewable energy and/or renewable energy technologies. Projects and programs that comprise a series of connected projects that meet these purposes may also be eligible for funding from the Consumer Education Program.

All outreach materials developed with program funds must be factual and broad-based, rather than specific to any product, service, manufacturer, installer, or provider. These materials include information, products, or services. As appropriate, projects should help position the Energy Commission as a consumer information resource.

Projects funded under the Consumer Education Program must recognize and identify the Energy Commission's funding of the project in materials provided to the public.

#### **Topics Eligible for Funding**

Projects and programs eligible for funding must address one or more of the following program goals and objectives:

1. Raising or increasing consumer awareness of renewable electricity generation options, the technologies, and their benefits,
2. Increasing adoption and installation of small-scale emerging renewable technologies, and
3. Leveraging strategic alliances and partnerships with organizations connected to renewable energy industry.

## Applicants Eligible for Funding

Applicants eligible for funding must be one of the following:

1. A non-profit individual, entity, organization, or company with a mission, expertise, and a track record that is consistent with the goals of the Renewable Energy Consumer Education Program.
2. An individual, entity, organization, or company with experience and expertise in public relations, consumer education, or public-interest marketing.
3. An agency, organization, or entity that conducts highly leveraged projects that involve public education about renewable energy.

Funding for projects or programs cannot be provided directly to commercial entities that are participating in the electricity market as a seller or trader of electricity services (including electric utilities), or that are manufacturing, selling, or installing renewable electric generation technologies or systems.

## Public Interest Requirements

Eligible projects and programs must be equitable to all stakeholders and the general public. As noted above, information must be factual and broad-based and must not provide an advantage to any specific manufacturer, seller, or installer of renewable energy technologies or systems. Overall guidance in achieving these public interest requirements is listed below.

Projects and programs must achieve the following:

1. Provide adequate, equitable, and timely information so that any interested party has the opportunity to coordinate with and/or participate in the project or program.
2. Return benefits, directly or indirectly, to ratepayers funding the Renewable Energy Program. These ratepayers currently include those in the service territories of Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.
3. Be inclusive in message by providing either generic information that applies to all relevant and known products or services, without mentioning any specific product or service, or by providing information about all relevant known products and services available to consumers.

More specific requirements may be incorporated into individual solicitations, as provided in the **Solicitations** section below

## V – Solicitations

Under the direction of the Committee overseeing the Renewable Energy Program, the Energy Commission will regularly release solicitations that announce the availability of Consumer Education funds to interested parties. The Energy Commission plans to release grant solicitations annually; contract solicitations will be released on an as-needed basis. Entities interested in obtaining funding must submit an application or proposal to the Energy Commission as specified in the pertinent solicitation document.

A solicitation document may be noticed as either a Request for Proposals (RFP), in the case of contracts, or a Program Opportunity Notice (PON), in the case of grants. Solicitations will either be open to any project that meets the Consumer Education program goals and purposes or targeted to a specific area of interest.

The solicitation document will specify the amount of funding available, any per-project funding caps or minimums, any match fund requirements, the project term (and in some cases, project category), the eligibility and administrative requirements for submitting an application, and the format and elements to be addressed as part of the application. The solicitation document will also provide the criteria and process that the Energy Commission will follow in evaluating applications as well as the timetable for making awards.

The solicitation document will also include a sample of the terms and conditions in the case of a grant solicitation and a sample contract agreement in the case of a contract solicitation. The funding award agreement or contract will identify the terms and conditions that the awardees must execute to receive a funding award. These terms and conditions include provisions dealing with the Energy Commission's indemnification, funding award payments and invoicing, project management, progress reports, dispute resolution, and award termination, as well as any provisions required by law. The Energy Commission may add special conditions on an as-needed basis to address the particulars of a specific solicitation. Eligible entities must provide specific information in their applications and bids for contracts and grants, as outlined in the solicitation document.

In certain cases, funding may be provided to support highly leveraged activities that address one or more of the goals and objectives of the Consumer Education Program, such as collaborative efforts between multiple public and private entities and organizations. Grant funding for collaborative efforts may be awarded on an individual basis without the benefit of a noticed solicitation if deemed appropriate by the Committee overseeing the Renewable Energy Program. To support these efforts, the Energy Commission must acquire a proportional benefit (or greater) for the funds allocated to the leveraged activity. As an example, consumer education funds may be used to support a multi-state or multi-agency public awareness campaign, provided the product or outcome of the joint effort meets or exceeds the value of the consumer education funds.



## **Match Funding**

Eligible entities applying for grant funds must provide match fund or in-kind contributions for their projects or programs, unless otherwise specified in the applicable solicitation document. Consumer Education Program grants provide support and funds to enhance the eligible recipient's project or program. The conditions and level of match funds required are specified in the solicitation documents. Under special circumstances, the solicitation document may provide for an exemption to the match funding requirements.

Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation document, match funding may originate from a variety of sources, including the applicant or other team members in the project, industry stakeholders, public interest or environmental organizations, governmental organizations, and electric utilities.

Match funding may include, but is not limited to, the contribution of cash, its equivalent, or a contribution of indirect costs or other non-cash support, such as:

1. In-kind services or contributions
2. Use of equipment or office space
3. Discounted rates, fees, or charges
4. Food, beverages, or facilities for workshops and conferences

All match fund contributions must be quantified, substantiated and documented, and directly related to the specific project or program for the grant funding sought.

Match funding cannot include the following:

1. Contributions made to the project before the Energy Commission's award of grant funds.
2. Funding or any other contribution to the project or program originating from the Energy Commission.

Contracts do not typically have the same match funding requirements.

## **Funding Limitations**

An applicant is eligible to receive one funding award per solicitation. Funding is not intended to underwrite an individual, entity, organization, program, or project for multiple funding cycles.

## **VI – Award Process**

### **Selection Process**

All proposals and applications received in response to a solicitation document will be reviewed and considered as described in the solicitation document. The review process will consist of an initial screening to ensure the proposals and applications meet eligibility requirements, followed by a more thorough evaluation by an evaluation committee. The evaluation committee will score all proposals and applications using the scoring criteria outlined in the solicitation document and recommend winning project(s) to the Committee, which in turn will make award recommendations to the Energy Commission, as necessary. The Committee, in its discretion, may reject any or all projects recommended by the evaluation committee or cancel the solicitation in its entirety.

### **Approval of Funding Awards**

Grants and contracts greater than \$10,000 must be approved by the Energy Commission at a Business Meeting. Grants and contracts of \$10,000 or less may be approved by the Committee overseeing the Renewable Energy Program. These smaller grants and contracts will be considered approved by the Energy Commission once notice of the Committee's approval is published.

### **Cancellation or Reduction of Funding Awards**

Awards may be cancelled or reduced as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.

## **VII – Administrative Requirements**

### **Award Extensions or Changes in Scope**

The term of an individual grant award may be extended for projects or programs that cannot be completed on schedule as long as the extension is reasonable and does not appreciably affect the value of the project or program. The grantee must request a grant award extension of the Energy Commission project manager in writing at least 30 days before the end of the grant term. The request must justify the extension and include a revised term date. An extension may be approved at the discretion of the Energy Commission project manager.

Changes to a grant award's work statement, budget line items, or both may be made under certain conditions. The changes must not alter the original scope or

purpose of the project or program as proposed and approved by the Committee or the Energy Commission. The grantee must request work statement and budget changes in writing to the Energy Commission's project manager before implementing any changes. Changes may be approved at the discretion of the Energy Commission's project manager.

## **Progress Reports**

All entities receiving funds from the Consumer Education Program must submit regular progress reports to the Energy Commission's project manager. The frequency of these reports will be specified in the contract or grant agreement. Unless specified in the contract or grant agreement, progress reports must include the following information:

- 1) Status of tasks in the work statement and overall progress with the project.
- 2) Status and copies of deliverables identified in the work statement.
- 3) Comparison of expenses to the expected budget and a description of match funds applied to the program.
- 4) Effectiveness of project to date (measures of effectiveness or project reach).
- 5) Any problems, difficulties, or delays in completing the project.

A progress report is required when submitting a payment request or invoice. No payments can be made without a progress report.

## **Invoicing and Payments**

Unless specified otherwise in the grant agreement or contract, funding award payments will be subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Payments will be made on a reimbursement basis only after the entity has submitted an invoice that includes all documentation to the Energy Commission.
- 2) All invoices must be submitted to the Energy Commission's accounting office and accompanied by all backup documentation and a progress report. In the case of a grant, a payment request form must be completed and signed. The backup documentation must include copies of paid invoices, receipts, and personnel time records, where appropriate. For grant projects, the invoice and the progress report must include documentation about match funds applied to the project or program.

- 3) The Energy Commission's project manager and the Renewable Energy Program Director, or designees, must approve and sign all invoices prior to payment. This approval is subject to acceptable submittal of all required progress reports, other specified products or deliverables, and the appropriateness of the invoiced expenses under the grant agreement or contract as determined by the Energy Commission.

## **Evaluation**

All awardees that receive funds under the Consumer Education Program must objectively evaluate the effectiveness of their services, activities, and products in creating consumer awareness and helping to build a market for renewable energy in California. To achieve this, an awardee may be required to obtain the services of a qualified outside evaluator who will determine the evaluation methodology, collect necessary data, assess metrics, standards and procedures, and conduct analysis to determine the effectiveness of the project or program in meeting the stated goals.

## **Payment Dispute**

The amount of any payment received under a grant agreement or contract may be disputed as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.

## **Random Audits**

Awardees under the Consumer Education Program are subject to random audits as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.

## **Record Retention**

Awardees under the Consumer Education Program must retain records pertaining to their funded projects or programs as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.